

R873. Tax Commission, Motor Vehicle.

R873-22M. Motor Vehicle.

R873-22M-34. Rule for Denial of Personalized Plate Requests Pursuant to Utah Code Ann. Sections 41-1a-104 and 41-1a-411.

(1) The personalized plate is a non-public forum. Nothing in the issuance of a personalized plate creates a designated or limited public forum. The presence of a personalized plate on a vehicle does not make the plate a traditional public forum.

(2) Pursuant to Section 41-1a-411(2), the division may not issue personalized license plates in the following formats:

(a) Combination of letters, words, or numbers with any connotation that is vulgar, derogatory, profane, or obscene.

(b) Combinations of letters, words, or numbers that connote breasts, genitalia, pubic area, buttocks, or relate to sexual and eliminatory functions. Additionally, "69" formats are prohibited unless used in a combination with the vehicle make, model, style, type, or commonly used or readily understood abbreviations of those terms, for example, "69 CHEV."

(c) Combinations of letters, words, or numbers that connote the substance, paraphernalia, sale, user, purveyor of, or physiological state produced by any ~~illicit drug,~~ narcotic, ~~[or]~~ intoxicant, or illicit drug.

(d) Combinations of letters, words, or numbers that express contempt, ridicule, or superiority of a race, religion, deity, ethnic heritage, gender, or political affiliation.

(e) (i) Combinations of letters, words, or numbers that express affiliations or actions that may be construed to suggest endangerment to the public welfare.

(ii) Examples of letters, words, or numbers described in Subsection (4)(e)(i) include words, signs, or symbols that represent:

(A) illegal activity;

(B) organized crime associations; or

(C) gang or gang terminology.

(iii) The division shall consult with local, state, and national law enforcement agencies to establish criteria to determine whether a combination of letters, words, or numbers express affiliations or actions that may be construed to suggest endangerment to the public welfare.

(3) If the division denies a requested combination, the applicant may request a review of the denial, in writing, within 15 days from the date of notification. The request must be directed to the Director of the Motor Vehicle Division and should include a detailed statement of the reasons why the applicant believes the requested license plates are not offensive or misleading.

(4) The director shall review the format for connotations that may reasonably be detected through linguistic, numerical, or phonetic modes of communication. The review may include:

(a) translation from foreign languages;

(b) an upside down or reverse reading of the requested format; and

(c) the use of references such as dictionaries or glossaries of slang, foreign language, or drug terms.

(5) The director shall consider the applicant's declared definition of the format, if provided.

(6) If the requested format is rejected by the director, the division shall notify the applicant in writing of the right to appeal the decision through the appeals process outlined in Tax Commission rule R861-1A-22.

(7) If, after issuance of a personalized license plate, the commission becomes aware through written complaint that the format may be prohibited under Subsection R873-22M-34(1), the division shall again review the format.

(8) If the division determines pursuant to Subsection R873-22M-34~~[(4)]~~(2) that the issued format is prohibited, the holder of the plates shall be notified in writing and directed to surrender the plates. This determination is subject to the review and appeal procedures outlined in Subsections ~~[R873-22M-34(2)]~~ (3) through ~~[(5)]~~(7) .

(9) A holder required to surrender license plates shall be issued a refund for the amount of the personalized license plate application fee and for the prorated amount of the personalized license plate annual renewal fee, or shall be allowed to apply for replacement personalized license plates at no additional cost.

(10) If the holder of plates found to be prohibited fails to voluntarily surrender the plates within 30 days after the mailing of the notice of the division's final decision that the format is prohibited, the division shall cancel the personalized license plates and suspend the vehicle registration.

KEY: taxation, motor vehicles, aircraft, license plates